

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 143

SP 035 560

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TITLE Issues in Teacher Education and Professional Development in the United States: Implications for Australia.
PUB DATE Jul 94
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Australian Teacher Education Association (Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, July 3-6, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accreditation (Institutions); *Accrediting Agencies; Comparative Education; Faculty Development; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Professional Development Schools; Program Evaluation; Schools of Education; *Standards; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Competencies; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Australia; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educ; Policy Implications; *Professionalization of Teaching; United States

ABSTRACT

In Australia at present, there is no central agency for the accreditation of teacher education courses. This paper examines the implications for Australian Schools of Education of the key issues of accreditation of courses and faculties, licensing of beginning teachers and advanced certification, and continuing professional development of teachers in the United States. A discussion of the newly published, revised standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) points out that some States are accepting these standards while others have complementary or separate standards. Licenses to teach are issued by the States to graduates of approved courses and to those who enter via alternative routes. Conditions, probationary periods and test requirements may apply. The Educational Testing Service conducts the National Teacher Examination and is now publishing its new Praxis tests. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is currently field testing its methods for rigorously assessing teacher performance in order to grant advanced certification to teachers with at least three years' experience. Professional development schools, clinical schools and laboratory schools are linking preservice teacher education and inservice education to promote the simultaneous renewal of teachers and teacher educators. (Contains 16 references.) (Author)

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ED 375 143

AUSTRALIAN TEACHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1994

ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION
AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES:
IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

Three fundamental issues in teacher education and the continuing professional development of teachers in the United States that have important implications for Australian teacher education are:

- a. the accreditation of teacher education units and their courses,*
- b. the licensing or initial certification of teachers, and*
- c. the advanced certification and professional development of teachers.*

Regarding accreditation, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has just published its revised standards. Some States are accepting these standards while others have complementary or separate standards.

Licences to teach are issued by the States to graduates of approved courses and to those who enter via alternative routes. Conditions, probationary periods and test requirements may apply. The Educational Testing Service conducts the National Teacher Examination and is now publishing its new Praxis tests.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is currently field testing its methods for rigorously assessing teacher performance in order to grant advanced certification to teachers with at least three years' experience. Professional development schools, clinical schools and laboratory schools are linking preservice teacher education and inservice teacher education to promote the simultaneous renewal of teachers and teacher educators.

When addressing the question of teacher education and the creation of a profession of teaching in the United States, Wise and Leibbrand (1993) point out that on the one hand there is a trend towards the nationalisation of education policy while on the other hand some want reforms to produce extreme localisation of decision-making. They identify three central but as yet unrelated policy mechanisms that will help create high quality teacher education and thereby contribute to the development of the teaching profession. The mechanisms are (1) accreditation, (2) licensing, and (3) advanced certification which will provide quality control for the teaching profession. These three mechanisms together with some associated issues have implications for Australian initial teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers.

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ACCREDITATION

In Australia at present, there is no central agency for the accreditation of teacher education courses. The States differ in the degree of interest they take in accreditation. In New South Wales, for example, since the demise of the former Higher Education Board several years ago, universities simply accredit their own courses and do not have to register them with any agency. The Minister for Education has laid down a few requirements that graduating students must have in order to gain employment in Departmental schools, but these are minimal. She has also expressed her view on the need for teacher educators to have had recent and relevant experience in schools, but this is not a mandatory requirement. Through her Ministerial Advisory Council on Teacher Education and the Quality of Teaching she has produced a list of competencies for beginning teachers and a strategic policy framework for teacher education. Clearly there is a move to influence or indeed control the quality of teacher education. By way of contrast, Queensland has had a Board of Teacher Education for many years (now Board of Teacher Registration), and it has played an important role in researching teacher education and registering courses.

By many overseas standards, certainly those being developed in the United States, accreditation of teacher education courses in Australia is a relatively low key affair at the political level. Accreditation might be rigorous in Australian universities, but there are few external rigorous requirements. Perhaps this is the way it should be. However, Australian teacher educators would be naive to think that it will continue this way. The time is propitious to look at developments overseas and to determine while we still have the opportunity what standards and controls we would like to see in teacher education and thereby contribute towards the creation of a genuine teaching profession in Australia.

In the United States, where there is growing emphasis on the simultaneous renewal of school teachers and teacher educators, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is becoming increasingly important. The breadth of its constituency indicates the standing it has:

Teacher Education:

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)

Teachers:

National Education Association (NEA)

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

State and Local Policy Makers:

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

National School Boards Association (NSBA)

Speciality Area Organisations:

(Numerous professional associations)

NCATE has just published its new list of standards which form the basis of accreditation for about 500 of the 1,300 teacher education units across the nation. Participation in NCATE accreditation is voluntary, and many universities do not subject themselves to it. This tends to be the case where local State agencies have detailed accreditation requirements and the universities feel that there is no point in going through the process twice. NCATE has recognized this problem and has made provision for its reviews to be combined with State reviews. Some States, Oregon for example, have simply adopted the NCATE standards and made it a requirement for its teacher education units to obtain NCATE accreditation.

The accreditation of an education unit is a long and thorough process which is governed by NCATE's Unit Accreditation Board. After applying for accreditation, an institution prepares a "preconditions" documentation which is examined and a preconditions report is issued

indicating whether all preconditions have been met. A Board of Examiners team of five or six members is appointed from a pool of about 500 people who have been specially trained for the task. The pool consists of approximately one-third teacher educators, one-third teachers, one-sixth state and local policy makers, and one-sixth representatives from specialty organisations. An institutional report and associated materials are submitted, the examiners visit the institution and write a report, an institutional rejoinder is submitted, and finally there is a public disclosure of the outcome. Experience has shown that a considerable number of institutions do not gain accreditation on their first attempt. A session at the AACTE conference in 1994 was designed to assist such institutions lift their act and make it. There are detailed handbooks for the key stages in the accreditation process, including:

Standards, Procedures, and Policies for the Accreditation of Professional Education Units

Handbook for Institutional Visits

Handbook for Continuing Accreditation

Conditions and Procedures for State/NCATE Partnerships

When comparing accreditation processes in the voluntary NCATE system with Australian practices, it is obvious that the focus in the United States is on education units and their courses. Australian universities tend to accredit individual courses or suites of courses, and have separate faculty reviews which evaluate the operation of education units (faculties). Perhaps the most important message from any comparison for Australian teacher education is the point that NCATE represents an attempt by the teacher education profession to be self-regulating.

Professional Development Schools

In a brief paper it is not possible to comment on a range of major developments in initial teacher education such as a search for a knowledge base, new approaches towards assessment, and internationalizing teacher education. These are all issues that are attracting attention in Australia. For example, Turney et al (1993) in Australia have addressed the question of the neglected knowledge needs of prospective and beginning teachers. This paper deals with only one of the significant developments in teacher education in the United States and that is the emergence of exemplary schools which are designated to have a key role in the professional development of preservice, novice and established teachers. These are called professional development schools (deriving from a Holmes Group report) or clinical schools (deriving from a Carnegie Forum report) and have special links with teacher education institutions. Other terms for similar types of schools include induction schools, professional practice schools and partner schools. They are not new versions of the laboratory schools that many universities still operate but rather new types of institutions. The concept of partnership in these new schools often extends well beyond links to universities to take in the business world and the wider community.

Many education units in higher education institutions, when arguing their case for NCATE accreditation, make partnership with these schools a feature of their operation. The schools afford academics opportunity to teach in functioning schools and thereby help overcome the criticism that teacher educators are too far removed from classrooms and are out of touch.

Abdal-Haqq (1991) argues that professional development schools are involved in restructuring education through changes in governance structures, re-designing of teacher work, improvements in teaching and learning, and changes in a range of relationships including their links to higher education institutions. They are supposed to be models of best practice which are analogous to teaching hospitals where exemplary practice and research provide an effective environment for the training and induction of new doctors. Advocates of these new schools argue that many public schools need reforming and are not the best places

or clinical settings for the training of new members of the teaching profession and the continuing development of experienced teachers.

One of the central concerns in the literature on professional development schools is the contribution that they can make to the development of a genuine profession of teaching. Professions are characterised not only as having a codified accessible knowledge-base, a collegium, and a relatively high degree of autonomy and self-regulation but also as having an effective means for educating and inducting new members. In most professions, under the supervision of expert practitioners, inductees can practise and be certified as having the appropriate competence. Professional development schools are seen to provide this opportunity for the teaching profession.

The Clinical Schools Clearinghouse (1993), which is associated with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, has published a useful reference on *Resources on Professional Development Schools: An Annotated Bibliography*. It not only provides a list of references to research and published material but also lists other organisations with a keen interest in professional development schools. The fact that this body of literature exists and that organisational structures are developing is clear evidence of the significance of the movement in the United States at present.

There are several concerns about professional development schools. To start with, they make heavy demands on human and financial resources. Issues of fairness and equity in relation to other schools are often raised. As far as teacher educators are concerned, their heavy involvement in the schools is sometimes not valued within university culture where research productivity and publications are so important.

In Australia, new forms of practice teaching are emerging and stronger partnerships with schools are developing. Internships or extended periods of practice teaching are characteristics of many revised courses. There are certainly moves in some states to put student teachers and inductees to the profession with advanced skills teachers who should provide exemplary models. Whether it would be desirable to establish "teaching schools" that are analogous to "teaching hospitals" is a moot point. Professional development schools in the United States are worth watching as Australian teacher educators experiment with new forms of partnership with schools.

LICENSING

In Australia the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL) addressed the issue of a national framework for teachers' qualifications and professional standards. On the basis of the progress made on developing national competency standards for teaching by the working party on professional preparation, NPQTL gained an exemption from the provisions of the mutual recognition legislation until 1994. The establishment of the Australian Teaching Council might lead one day to a national system for teacher registration, but there is still a long way to go. Meanwhile, developments are occurring at state level. Queensland has a Board of Teacher Registration. In Victoria, the Teachers Registration Board is to be abolished and replaced with the Standards Council of the Teaching Profession. It is debatable whether we have made much progress since 1990 when the working party of the Australian Education Council chaired by Ebbeck really put the question of teacher registration across Australia in the "too hard" basket by advocating a voluntary system of national teacher registration.

In the United States, like Australia, teacher registration or licensing is generally a State responsibility. In California, for example, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing has detailed procedures for registering teachers. It is somewhat atypical in that it specifies teacher preparation for both elementary and secondary schools as a one-year postgraduate program following the completion of a four-year degree which is usually in arts or science. The key issue to note is that teachers need to be licensed following the completion of

qualifications in approved programs. One source of information about the different state requirements is the summary compiled by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

In 1987 the Council of the Chief State School Officers set up the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) to enhance collaboration among the states on licensing issues. It is focusing on how teacher assessment should take place for initial licensing and how induction to the profession might best be undertaken. In so doing it is seeking to develop performance-based standards that are compatible with those being established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards which is discussed later. The initial work concentrated on a common core of teaching knowledge for all teachers which would form a foundation for standards in specialty areas.

Standards, Internships and Induction

Determining standards for entry to the teaching profession can present a problem because standards can be related to internships, induction and probation which occur at different points in time. Another dimension of the problem is to determine who applies the standards, universities or employing authorities or both. In the United States some of the states are requiring internships and probationary periods before issuing a continuing license to teach. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium therefore had to make a decision about the appropriate period in the variety of teacher preparation models when its standards would apply. It advocated the point at which the new teacher is eligible to be the primary person in charge of children and at which a license is issued. This same dilemma faced the NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Teacher Education and the Quality of Teaching when it developed its *Competencies for Beginning Teachers*.

For too long in Australia enquiries into education and teacher education have failed to come up with a workable solution to the problem of national registration of teachers. Some progress has been made to recognize inter-state qualifications and registration, but it is doubtful whether the body that could take a lead in getting a national system operating, namely the Australian Teaching Council, will be fully supported by the states. Australian educators could profit by keeping an eye on developments in the United States where moves are under way to promote cooperation among the states to deal with teacher licensure.

ADVANCED CERTIFICATION

The report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, produced by the Carnegie Corporation's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession in 1986, contained a major recommendation that led to the establishment of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The National Board is planning to provide a voluntary means to recognize highly accomplished teaching practice by granting certification based on what teachers should know and be able to do. This certification (which is sometimes referred to as advanced certification) is different from state licensing that is mandatory and based on minimal levels of competence for initial registration.

From an Australian perspective, it is important to note that the National Board is not part of a state or federal arrangement, neither is it linked to colleges of education in universities. The National Board's by-laws require that a majority of its 63 members be active teachers in schools. At present two-thirds are teaching professionals. It has received substantial funding from foundations, corporations and the federal government.

Over thirty separate certificates will be available according to four overlapping student developmental levels and depending upon whether a teacher is a generalist or a subject-matter specialist. They will be awarded for fixed terms from seven to ten years and be renewable. An abridged version of the general standards for certification that derive from the central policy statement, *What Teachers should Know and be able to Do*, are as follows:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach, and how to teach those subjects to all students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

(National Board, 1990)

The development of assessment protocols has been undertaken by teams that have drawn heavily on the work of Lee Shulman from Stanford University. For the in-school component teachers will have to prepare a detailed portfolio of their teaching performance. For the assessment centre component teachers will undertake such things as the evaluation of other teachers' practice, subject matter tests and interviews over one or two days. Field testing of the instruments has involved over one hundred school districts.

As an aside, it is significant to note that the Educational Testing Service (ETS) has recently produced its Praxis series of tests which are professional assessments for beginning teachers. ETS sees them as having a place in teacher licensing. Praxis 1 deals with academic skills assessments, Praxis 2 deals with subject assessments, while Praxis 3 is concerned with classroom performance assessments. The focus on classroom performance illustrates the emphasis in the United States on what teachers should know and be able to do. This is going to become increasingly the case as the National Board offers its accreditation to teachers.

In order to apply for National Board assessment, teachers must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution (not necessarily a teacher education degree), three years' teaching experience, and a valid state teaching license for those three years where one is required by their state. Certification will become available in the 1994-95 school year for a fee of US\$975. How many teachers will opt for it will remain to be seen. Oklahoma and Iowa have already enacted legislation to support and encourage National Board Certification (Portfolio, Vol 1, p.3) and, given the large investment of financial and human resources into the program, it seems as if there is sufficient political imperative to ensure its success.

What are the implications of the work of the National Board in the United States for the professional development of teachers in Australia? There is potential for the Australian Teaching Council to develop a similar system for the recognition of advanced teaching competence. Certainly, the concept of an advanced skilled teacher could be linked to some form of advanced certification. The Faculty of Education at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur in partnership with the Metropolitan South West Region of the Department of School Education is considering the introduction of a Master of Teaching program which will be largely classroom-based and employ many of the techniques developed by the National Board for the recognition of high quality teaching. In its region of Sydney, which employs large numbers of beginning teachers each year, there is a particular need to assist teachers establish themselves as excellent practitioners.

Alternative Pathways into Teaching

Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards may prove to be attractive to people who have entered teaching via an alternative route to the college of education one. Most states have approved alternative certification routes into teaching which are really alternative forms of licensure based on programs of study and experience which may or may not involve institutions of higher education (Hawley, 1992, p.5). There is disquiet among many teacher educators about the efficacy of these alternative pathways, but they have generally learnt to accommodate the schemes. Advocates of the schemes stress

that they are not simply a means for handling teacher shortages in particular areas but a means for bringing qualified people from diverse backgrounds into the teaching profession. For example, people leaving the armed forces often take up teaching as a career.

Teach for America (1994) recruits people from college campuses and across the country generally for at least a two-year commitment to teach in under-resourced urban and rural schools. Recruits are put into a residency program in which they assume full teaching responsibilities as they participate in two years of professional development. The scheme claims to recruit talented and dedicated individuals from all academic and cultural backgrounds.

Australian teacher education institutions have traditionally provided a means for people from other professional backgrounds to enter the teaching profession by completing a Diploma of Education. At present while unemployment levels are high, the federal government is exerting pressure on universities to take in high levels of school leavers. Notwithstanding this pressure, it is likely that Australia will experience a similar demand to that which is occurring in the United States. The message for Australian universities might be to find more creative and attractive ways to let mature age people from different fields of employment gain entry to the teaching profession via accredited university courses, especially courses for early childhood and primary teachers.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This paper has not attempted to cover a comprehensive range of issues in teacher education in the United States. Furthermore, it has not related the issues that have been discussed to trends in teacher education in other countries such as England. In spite of these limitations, the paper provides food for thought for Australian teacher educators by examining the key issues of the accreditation of courses and faculties, the licensing of beginning teachers, and the continuing professional development of teachers in the United States. There are indications on the Australian scene which suggest that these issues will be the focus of attention in this country in the next few years.

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